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ABSTRACT

This curriculum is designed to assist Catholic school teachers and parish catechists in their efforts to foster a pro-life attitude in students in grades 7 and 8. Following an introduction is the curriculum which features six lessons. These are: (1) Unique in all the world; (2) The first nine months of human life; (3) The hard facts about abortion; (4) Abortion and human rights; (5) Respect for human life; and (6) Choose Life! Student handouts are included in the lessons, and a series of fetal development visuals are appended. (DB)

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Choose Life!

UNBORN CHILDREN AND THE RIGHT TO LIFE

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Choose Life!

UNBORN CHILDREN AND THE RIGHT TO LIFE

Junior High Level: Grades 7-8

BROWN ROA Publishing Media
NCEA

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Imprimatur
✠ James Cardinal Hickey, S.T.D., J.C.D.
Archbishop of Washington
July 30, 1991

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Foreword

It was on the occasion of an early meeting of the then newly forming National Federation for Life that Sister Catherine T. McNamee, C.S.J., President of the National Catholic Educational Association, made a gracious and welcome offer. She told me that the NCEA would be willing to develop pro-life curricular materials. In my judgment, that offer was of immense importance, and I was deeply gratified when Father Francis D. Kelly, Executive Director of the NCEA's Department of Religious Education, accepted the responsibility to see the project through. The Knights of Malta American Association President, Mr. J. Peter Grace, guaranteed the funding needed. The results speak for themselves.

Much as I, personally, have believed that the permissive laws of our nation and our states regarding abortion categorically must be changed, even more crucial a need is that minds and hearts be educated to understand the sacredness of every human person as made in the image and likeness of God. No law can ever make morally right the deliberate, direct destruction of **any** innocent human life. That is a moral absolute. Millions of people, including the young, have come to believe that whatever the civil law permits must be acceptable. The entire orientation must be turned around. Without education, such will not happen.

I am deeply grateful to the NCEA and for all responsible for giving us an educational tool that has been critically needed for so long. I suspect that parents and teachers all over the country, and perhaps throughout the world, will share my gratitude.

John Cardinal O'Connor
Archbishop of New York
Chairman, NCCB Pro-Life Activities Committee

Preface

Catholic school religion teachers and parish catechists perform a precious and invaluable service for the faith life of tens of thousands of young people across the United States. Their efforts to fulfill the mandate of the Second Vatican Council "to foster a faith that is living, conscious and active" merit our admiration and support.

This pro-life curriculum is intended as a service and support for our teachers and catechists in their crucial efforts at moral catechesis to foster a pro-life attitude in those they teach.

Abortion is one of the great moral issues of our time. Tragically, we find that even some of our own Catholic people are confused by the dominance of relativism and subjectivism in our culture. The result is that the absolute value of life and the clarity of God's will in this issue are obscured for them.

The moral issue of abortion is a litmus test for the application of Christian moral principles. Catechists and religion teachers should be willing to speak out for the unborn and emphasize the principle of the absolute sanctity of human life. The fact that 1.6 million abortions are committed every year in our country is a national scandal. One wonders what judgement the prophets of the Old Testament would forbode if they were witnesses to such evil. Are we not called to a prophetic role in our day?

In the face of this clear moral evil religious educators are neglectful if they do not present these principles to their students. To assist teachers, the NCEA in conjunction with BROWN Publishing–ROA Media, has prepared these materials with the assistance of a wide spectrum of theologians, health care professionals, curriculum experts, etc. I express my gratitude to those listed in this publication as critical reviewers for the time and care they gave in helping develop this resource.

In a special way, I express my personal gratitude to His Eminence, John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York and chairman of the United States Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities for his support and for the leadership he has given to this cause; to Mr. J. Peter Grace and the Knights of Malta, whose generous and indispensable contribution contributed to the writing and publication of these materials; and, finally, to Mr. Ernest T. Nedder, President of BROWN Publishing–ROA Media, and Sandra Hirstein, whose openness to such a project and whose professional skills have been crucial in bringing it to realization.

It is now our prayerful hope that the teachers and catechists who use this resource may find it a sensitive and effective means of helping our Catholic young people understand the beauty, truth and nobility of the Church's teaching about respect for human life.

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Introduction

In February of 1990, in Washington, DC, bishops, catechetical leaders, and publishers heard the need expressed for a curriculum specifically aimed at helping young Catholics understand and heed the Church's teaching on abortion. As a result of that expressed need, the National Catholic Education Association, under the leadership of Rev. Francis D. Kelly, in conjunction with BROWN Publishing–ROA Media, decided to act. NCEA determined to sponsor the development of curriculum resources designed to present in clear and certain terms the Church's teaching on abortion and the right to life of unborn children.

While fully aware of the importance of seeing the Church's teaching on abortion as but one part of its teaching on the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death (a "consistent life ethic" as it has been termed), those involved in the development of this teaching resource also recognized the particular need that exists among Catholics for specific education regarding the issue of abortion. Why is there a particular need for education on this issue? It is because, as the bishops of the United States have reminded us, abortion is a pivotal issue.

"Abortion in particular blunts a sense of the sacredness of human life. In a society where the innocent unborn are killed wantonly, how can we expect people to feel righteous revulsion at the act or threat of killing noncombatants in war?" ("The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," no. 285)

The Church teaches that the right to life of all human beings, from conception onward, is the *fundamental* and *foundational* right. It is the condition out of which all other rights emerge. "Hence it must be protected above all others" ("Declaration on Abortion," no. 11, November 18, 1974).

It is very important that Catholic young people have the opportunity to focus upon and understand the Church's teaching on this fundamental and foundational issue.

For this reason, *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* has a consciously limited scope. It has four specific goals:

- To promote recognition of the unborn as human beings
- To promote respect for all human life, particularly the unborn
- To promote responsibility to care for those who are most defenseless, particularly unborn children
- To promote greater awareness of the scientific, historical, social, and moral information pertinent to the unborn

Contained within these four goals are six principles. Our objective is to help young Catholics recognize and act in light of these truths:

1. Every human being is a unique person made in the image and likeness of God; therefore, at every stage of life, every human being is important, deserving of care, and has a right to life.
2. Human life begins at conception—not at birth nor at any other arbitrary point beyond conception.
3. Human development is a continuous, gradual process that begins at conception and lasts throughout life.
4. Abortion is the intentional removal of an unborn human child from its mother so as to kill the human life already begun.

5. Abortion is contrary to the prime goal of human society which is "to protect human rights and secure basic justice for all members of society." ("Economic Justice for All," no. 122)

6. God's will is that people choose life, and not destroy it; therefore the Church opposes abortion and supports many alternatives to abortion.

The desired outcomes of the curriculum are listed below. It is hoped that, after using *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life,* that young Catholics will be able to do the following:

1 Respect for Human Life

- Explain what it means to be a unique human being.
- Explain why the right to life is a human right.
- Tell what the Bible says about life in the womb. (See Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139; Luke 1:39–44.)
- Name some ways in which the community supports and cares for pregnant women and families and children in need.
- Tell what "to respect life" means.

2 Beginning of Human Life

- Explain how human life is special among all other life.
- Tell when human life begins.
- Define *conception* and describe what happens immediately after conception.
- Explain the special responsibility that accompanies our capacity to cooperate with God in bringing new human beings into existence.

3 Gestation of Human Life

- Tell where and how the developing baby grows.
- Describe stages of fetal development.
- Describe the capabilities of unborn babies.
- Describe what unborn babies can feel (or experience).
- Compare the capabilities of an unborn baby with a newborn.

4 Destruction of Human Life

- Tell what abortion is.
- Give some important statistics regarding abortion.
- Describe the major methods of abortion.
- Describe complications associated with abortion.
- Explain why the Church holds abortion to be a most abhorrent moral evil.

5 Social Care of Human Life

- Describe ways in which our society promotes anti-life attitudes.
- Explain why a society committed to the defense of human rights and dignity must establish a
- Explain why a society committed to the defense of human rights and dignity must establish a structure of justice that provides legal protection for all human beings—from conception onward.
- Explain the Supreme Court decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* and why a Christian response to the court's decisions would be to overturn them.
- Compare the Supreme Court's position on abortion to the Court's pre-Civil War position on slavery.
- Explain why abortion is not a realistic solution to the following social problems: "unwanted children," teen pregnancy, rape, incest, and overpopulation.
- Explain why abortion is not simply a private matter.

6 Protection of Human Life

- Explain the Church's opposition to abortion and its response to the major arguments of abortion-rights groups.
- List the Christian values that are violated by abortion.
- Name alternatives to abortion.
- List the ways the Church supports pro-life activities.
- Describe the goals of the Right-to-Life movement and describe ways to spread the pro-life message.

This resource book is one of three books that form the total curriculum. It is designed for students in grades 7–8. Similar resource books have been designed for children in grades 5–6 or 9–12. Each resource book contains:

- a general introduction to the resource book
- suggestions as to how the curriculum might be infused into other curriculum areas (for example, science, health, family life, human sexuality, and other related areas)
- 6 lesson plans per level (for approximately 30 to 45 minutes of class time)
- black line activities, handouts, and such, for in-class or take-home use
- parent involvement suggestions

Those involved in the development of *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* hope that, by educating young people about the issue of the right-to-life of unborn children, greater respect for the value of all human life will result. As the bishops of the United States have said:

In focusing attention on the sanctity of human life, therefore, we hope to generate a greater respect for the life of each person in our society. We are confident that greater respect for human life will result from continuing the public discussion of abortion and from efforts to shape our laws so as to protect the life of all persons, including the unborn. ("Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities")

Lesson Plans, Methods, and Resources

The structure of *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* has been designed with the needs of teachers in mind. To help teachers quickly recognize the content and methodology involved in each lesson, the same simple overview begins each lesson presentation.

Lesson Number	Title
Objective	Identifies the content addressed in the lesson and a hoped-for student behavior
Summary	Provides an overview of the concepts covered in the lesson, together with the procedures for presenting the content
Time	Alerts teacher to the time needed for presenting the lesson
Teacher Preparation	Informs the teacher about the materials and/or resources needed for teaching the lesson
Procedure	Summarizes, in step-by-step fashion, the procedures and activities that make up the lesson
Evaluation	Suggests an activity that allows the teacher to determine whether students understand the concept and can demonstrate the behavior defined in the objective
Enrichment	Suggests optional activities for further developing concepts within the lesson

Following the overview, there is a teacher background essay. This essay, while hardly exhaustive, provides a concise explanation of the main ideas to be presented in the body of the lesson.

Immediately after the essay is a step-by-step description of the teaching procedure for the lesson. The teaching procedure follows a fairly standard format:

- an introductory activity to generate interest and involvement in the topic
- the presentation of the main ideas for the lesson
- further exploration and clarification of the main ideas
- a suggested activity for applying the main ideas in some practical way

A closing prayer is provided to conclude the lesson procedure. Following the closing prayer is an optional home activity, designed to reinforce the lesson and to foster parent involvement in the learning process.

Each lesson also provides teachers with the handouts and work sheets they will need as they teach each lesson. These black-line masters may be duplicated as needed.

While it is not necessary to follow the lesson plans slavishly, teachers should remain true to the basic aim and content of each lesson. Adapt them to your local circumstances, to your own teaching style, to the availability of resources, and to the readiness and ability of your students. For example, if you are able to obtain a guest speaker who is an expert on the topic to be covered (for example, a doctor who is willing to describe current abortion methods); adapt that lesson plan accordingly.

A basic methodology, generally regarded as an effective teaching/learning model, is used in the lesson plans. There is a balance of student involvement and teacher input, as well as a balance of group activity and individual work/reflection. The lessons also attempt to provide a balance of left-brain, analytic activities with right-brain imaging and creative activities. It is presumed that the lessons in this teaching resource will be taught in this general manner and not be reduced to a series of "lectures."

Each lesson, as presented in this resource, is a complete teaching package. No additional resources are required. However, several optional resources are identified in each lesson. All the films/videos are pertinent to the topic of the lesson. If available to you, they can be used in place of, or as a reinforcement of, your own presentation. Likewise, the suggested print material is very informative and attractively printed, often including highly effective graphics. These can be used to teach the main ideas of the lesson or as reinforcement. If time and budget allow, seriously consider acquiring some of these print materials to use with the lessons for which they are suggested. Also, do not hesitate to seek the service of outside speakers if any are available to you. Your diocesan Respect Life or Family Life office may be able to provide you with a list of speakers in your area who are experts on one or another of the topics contained in these lessons.
NOTE: The factual information and data (statistics and so forth) contained in the lesson plan materials represent what was available when the lesson plans were developed. Given the contemporary nature of the abortion issue, new data and new findings from scientific studies appear regularly. Also, national statistics may not reflect realities in your local community. It is important to point this out to your students. As you become aware of new data of a reliable nature, adjust the data in these lessons accordingly. Finally, because the abortion issue is very contemporary and controversial, it receives much news coverage on a regular basis. Whenever possible, integrate current stories into these lessons, especially if they deal with the issue at the local level.

Integrating *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* into the present curriculum given the life-and-death urgency of the abortion issue, as well as its timely nature, there is no need to make excuses for including it in the curriculum of any Catholic school or religious education program. It fits logically, of course, within the religion curriculum under a variety of topics: for example, within the teaching of the Ten Commandments and specifically the Fifth Commandment; within a course on the Church's teachings on social justice; within any course on morality and ethics; and within a course on marriage, family, and parenting. It also fits logically within a course on sexuality education. It could easily be included in a biology course that deals with human reproduction. There is a close connection between this Unit and various subjects covered in history, civics, and social sciences—in so far as these deal with basic human rights and the government's obligation to protect these rights. These subjects would include slavery in the United States, the Jewish Holocaust under Nazi Germany, or the nature of human freedom and the basic rights of citizens.

Therefore, it should not be difficult to find an appropriate place to integrate *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* into your existing curriculum. There is one word of caution. The material has been developed precisely as a Unit—that is, the lessons build upon one another. Thus, it will be most effective when the lessons are presented fairly close to each other. Presenting one lesson a week for six consecutive weeks, for example, would afford the students time to assimilate and integrate the material, while also allowing them to connect each lesson with the previous one. The effectiveness of the lessons will be diminished if the interval between them is too lengthy.

Parental Involvement

The primacy of the role of parents in the religious education of their children, especially in those areas related to human sexuality has been widely fostered by the Church in documents such as *Educational Guidance in Human Love* by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1983). Those who implement any program related to human sexuality, such as the *Choose Life!* program must always keep the primacy of parents in mind.

Parents should be directly involved in the decision to implement the *Choose Life!* curriculum in their school or parish. Teachers should be made aware of the importance of supporting parents in those responsibilities related to human sexuality education, and parents will support teachers and programs that help them in this task.

Not all parents are well versed in the Church's position on abortion. Many need assistance in working with this issue. The *Choose Life!* program can serve as a vehicle to help both parents and children better understand the foundational and fundamental nature of the right to life issue.

In relation to the primacy of the parental role, the educational institution has a duty to parents. This duty has a number of dimensions:

1. The duty to involve the parents from the very beginning in the choice of the program and the choice of instructors, and to provide the parents with a means of ongoing communication and evaluation.

2. The duty to provide parents with clear, concise explanations of what is being done in the program.

3. The duty to provide parents with an opportunity to deepen their own understanding of the Church's position on unborn children and the right to life. The formation of parents in regard to this issue is varied. They will appreciate the opportunity to learn what the program can offer.

4. The duty to assure parents that the program is truly consistent with the position of the Church on the fundamental issue of right to life by providing them with access to the resources relevant to the program.

5. The duty to involve parents during the course of the program and to seek out their feedback, so that it might be integrated into the lesson planning process.

In helping parents to deepen their own understanding and helping them to take responsibility for helping their children better understand this vital issue, the school or parish fulfills its own responsibilities. All involved thus benefit.

Organizations

The following national organizations are an excellent source of background materials, current statistics and various teacher aids. They can also provide information concerning regional offices in your area.

Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 Fourth St., NE
Washington, DC 20017

National Right to Life Committee
419 7th Street, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20004

National Right to Life Committee:
Education Trust
417 7th Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

Your diocesan Respect Life and/or Family Life office (Most diocesan Respect Life agencies maintain a library of pro-life materials, teacher aids, and audio-visuals. Most also maintain a speakers' bureau.)

Publishers

The following publishers have a strong commitment to the pro-life movement and will provide a current catalogue of books, materials, teacher aids, and audio-visuals.

Life-Cycle Books
PO Box 792
Lewiston, NY 14092–0792

Hayes Publishing, Inc.
6304 Hamilton Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45224

Intercessors for America
PO Box 2639
Reston, VA 22090

Easton Publishing Company
PO Box 1064
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Ignatius Press
15 Oakland Avenue
Harrison, NY 10528

Liturgical Press
Collegeville, MN 56321

Church Documents

From the Vatican

"Declaration on Abortion," Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, November 18, 1974.

"Educational Guidance in Human Love," Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, March, 1983.

"Christifidelis Laici," Pope John Paul II, December 30, 1988.

From the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

"Statement on Abortion," April 22, 1970.

"Declaration on Abortion," November 18, 1970.

"Pastoral Message on Abortion," February 13, 1973.

"Resolution on the Pro-Life Constitutional Amendment," November 13, 1973.

"Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities," November 20, 1975.

"Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Reaffirmation," November 14, 1985.

"Resolution on Abortion," November 1989

"Human Sexuality, A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning," February, 1991.

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Abortion Information for Classroom Teachers, National Right to Life Committee Educational Trust.

First Nine Months of Life by Geraldine Lux Flanagan (Simon and Schuster).

Life Magazine Reprint #27: "Life Before Birth," Time-Life Multi-Media, Paramus, NJ.

Abortion: The Silent Holocaust, Fr. John Powell, SJ, Argus Communications, Dallas, TX.

Handbook on Abortion, Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke, Hayes Publications, Cincinnati, OH.

Let's Talk to Teens About Chastity, Molly Kelly, The Center for Learning, Rocky River, OH.

Respect Life Program Manual (Published Annually), National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC.

To Rescue the Future: The Pro-Life Movement in the 1980s, David Andrusko, Life-Cycle Books, Lewiston, NY.

The Least of These, Curt Young, Moody Press, Chicago, IL.

"We are the People Who Believe in Life" and "100 Years of Catholic Social Teachings," *Catholic Update* Reprints, St. Anthony Press, Cincinnati, OH.

Pamphlets

"Abortion: Question and Answers," Cardinal John O'Connor, Archdiocese of New York, July 1990.

Videos

"Abortion: Does Anyone Really Care?" Rev. John Powell, Franciscan Communications.

"Abortion, It's Legal, Common, and Wrong," Don Bosco Multimedia.

"Abortion, the Time Is Now," Don Bosco Multimedia.

"Downs Syndrome Blessing," Womanity.

"The Story of Mary Jo," Credence Cassettes.

"Teens and Chastity," Molly Kelly, Don Bosco Multimedia

"Abortion Issues," Molly Kelly, Don Bosco Multimedia

Lesson One
Overview

Unique in All the World

Objective

The students will deepen their awareness of and respect for the dignity and responsibility which the capacity to procreate gives to each person, including themselves.

Summary

In this lesson, students will review the reasons why humans beings are special, in all the universe, as God's own children. An important dimension of our dignity is our capacity to participate with God in bringing new human beings into existence. With this dignity comes special responsibility.

Time

30–45 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, a Bible

Procedure

Initial worksheet, teacher input, class discussion, and small group worksheet activity

Evaluation

The students' ability to complete the final worksheet adequately will illustrate their grasp of the material presented.

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

Sexuality, Something Special (film)
In God's Image Series
Franciscan Communications
1229 South Santee
Los Angeles, CA 90015

Why Man Creates (film)
Pyramid Films
PO Box 1048
Santa Monica, CA 90406

God Doesn't Make Junk (film)
In God's Image Series
Franciscan Communications
1229 South Santee
Los Angeles, CA 90015

Lesson One

Teacher Background

Unique in All the World

In this first lesson, you will want to stress with the students three important facts which are foundational to developing a proper understanding of abortion. First, we humans are unique in all the universe. Our uniqueness is rooted in our intelligence and free will. We can know the truth and make free choices. We are the only creatures on earth who can do this, and we can do so only because we, alone of all bodily creatures, are made in the image and likeness of God. In Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, God became a human being, so that God could share divine life with us forever. All life is good, but human life is precious.

To these, we add the marvelous powers of imagination, creativity, resourcefulness, and inventiveness, which have produced all the great works of art and technology throughout history. More important, we are capable of heroic spiritual acts—of generosity, bravery, courage, love and self-sacrifice. Capping off all of this is the fact of our immortality. In short, each human being is a precious and unique "masterpiece" of God, gifted with marvelous powers and capacities, and destined to live forever.

In this light, the second fact to stress is that God invites us into partnership in creating new human beings! Of all the gifts and powers we humans have, perhaps the greatest is our capacity to bring new, unique human beings into existence. To parent a new human being is the greatest act of human creativity, since what we produce through parenting is another unique person who will live forever. Our gift of sexuality bestows great dignity and great responsibility upon us.

In this context, the third point of the lesson is our responsibility to respect this gift of our sexuality and its creative power. We are called to use this gift only as God intends us to use it. We are called to practice the virtue of chastity. This is not the message found in much of society and the media. Society tends to treat the gift of our sexuality with anything but respect and responsibility.

If we can help the students grow in their understanding of the true nature of the gift of sexuality and their awesome capacity to bring new, unique persons into existence—persons destined to live forever—the students will be much more inclined to approach this gift with respect and responsibility. Also, they will be better able to appreciate what abortion really involves—namely, the killing of human beings which other human beings have brought into existence!

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Distribute Handout 1.1, "Great Creations," and ask students to complete the worksheet. After sufficient time, invite students to share some of the items they identified.

• Now make the following comment and pose this question: "Those things you have named are truly wonderful, but you have not yet identified the single greatest thing we humans have done. What do you think it might be?" (Answer: We have brought into existence new human beings.)

• If no one guesses the correct answer in due time, share it with them and then proceed with the presentation of the main ideas of the lesson.

Present Main Ideas

• In the first part of your presentation, identify the various qualities that make us truly wonderful and unique in all creation:

1. We are the only creatures on earth who are truly free and can choose what we want to become and how to live our lives.
2. Our intelligence is unsurpassed. As "smart" as computers are, they are only as "smart" as the people who design and program them.
3. We are the only creatures on earth with the power of imagination and the ability to create art, music, and new inventions.
4. We are the most adaptable of creatures on earth, able to live anywhere, including outer space.
5. Ultimately, of course, we are made in the image and likeness of God; we are God's children; Jesus Christ, God's Word made flesh is our brother. He took on flesh like ours, so that like Him, we could rise in glory and live new life forever.

• Expand on these ideas in your own words and invite students to contribute their own ideas of what makes us unique and special.

• After describing some of these qualities that make us unique and special, stress these two points that are central to the lesson:

1. God shows us great honor and trust by allowing us to be partners with God in the creation of new human beings. The gift of our sexuality and our capacity to reproduce are very special gifts indeed.
2. That is why we have a very serious responsibility to reverence these gifts and use them only as God intends. The capacity to bring new human beings into existence is not something to be treated lightly. Those who truly value their sexuality and its life-giving power recognize the need for chastity. They practice and promote it.

• After making these points, distribute Handout 1.2. Tell the students that the handout contains two very important Catholic teachings.

• Ask the students to read the statements and then to briefly summarize, in their own words, what the statement means to them. When the students have completed their summary statements, ask for volunteers to share their "translations."

• Finally, observe that much of our society today does not regard either human life or our gift of sexuality very highly. Human beings are often treated as "things" to be used and exploited, rather than as children of God to be respected and cared for. Our gift of sexuality is often reduced to a form of selfish entertainment, and the virtue of chastity is ignored or contradicted.

Explore Further

• Ask students to give examples of some "rules" which their parents give them regarding how they are expected to treat their property: bikes, boom boxes, skate boards, clothes, furniture at home, and soon. (For example, I must put my bike in the garage every night. I have to take my watch off when I play ball.)

• Observe that such rules are all intended to help you treat valuable items with the respect and the care they deserve. Now distribute Handout 1.3, "God's Rules and Our Society." Explain that the "rules" listed on the handout make sense only when you are mature enough

to recognize both the true value of each human person and the awesome power you have to bring new human beings into existence. Further explain that sometimes in society God's rules are ignored or contradicted.

Apply

• *(Note:* If the students in your class might find working in a mixed group intimidating, divide the students into same-sex groups.)

• Now form class into small groups. Invite each group, working together, to attempt to identify in each category on the worksheet what they consider examples of "breaking the rules."

Ask groups to share and compare their work with the entire class. Encourage debate if groups disagree on what might be an example of "breaking the rules."

• Summarize lesson by reviewing these key points:

1. We human beings are indeed wonderful and unique in all creation and each one of us is a precious child of God in God's eyes.
2. God truly honors and trusts us by giving us the capacity to bring new human beings into existence.
3. We owe it to God, to ourselves, and to each other to treat this gift of sexuality according to the "rules" God gives us. This means we must practice and promote the virtue of chastity.

• Invite students to become quiet and prepare for a closing prayer. Once the students are quiet, have one of them read reverently Corinthians 6:12–20. After the reading invite students to tell God in silence how grateful they are for the gift of life and the gift of sexuality. Conclude by praying this or a comparable prayer:

> *O God, we thank You for the gift of life and for the gift of sexuality which enables us to bring new human beings into existence. Help us to always reverence our bodies and reproductive powers. Help us to treat each other with the respect due to children of God. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Your Son. Amen.*

Optional Home Activity

• Invite students to share and discuss "God's Rules" with their parents. Together, they should then go through the evening paper and try to identify stories/events/entertainments which seem to violate these rules by cheapening human life and the gift of sexuality.

Handout 1.1 Great Creations

Instructions: List in order what you personally consider the ten greatest, most unique, most ingenious creations we humans have ever made.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

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Handout 1.2 The Greatest Gifts

Read the two statements given on this page. Below each statement, write a brief summary of what the statement means to you.

1. ". . . Human life is a precious gift from God. . . . Recognition of the dignity of the human person, made in the image of God, lies at the very heart of our individual and social duty to respect human life." ("Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities," no. 2)

2. "Everyone should be persuaded that human life and the task of tansmitting it are not realities bound up with this world alone. Hence, they cannot be measured or perceived only in terms of it, but always have a bearing on the eternal destiny of men." ("Gaudium et Spes," no. 51)

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Handout 1.3 God's Rules

Instructions: Listed below are "God's Rules" for the use of the gift and creative power of our sexuality. In your group, discuss and then name in each category at least one example that ignores or contradicts "God's Rules."

1. Treasure, respect, and reverence the gift of sexuality.
2. Celebrate and enjoy the gift of sexual intercourse only within the marriage relationship.
3. Respect and care for each person whom the gift of your sexuality brings into existence.

TV shows that violate and/or promote the violation of these rules.

Current movies that violate and/or promote the violation of these rules.

Songs/music/videos that violate and/or promote the violation of these rules.

Government laws that violate and/or promote the violation of these rules.

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Lesson Two
Overview

The First Nine Months of Human Life

Objective

The students will review and expand their knowledge of the process of the human development from conception to birth.

Summary

In this lesson, students will review in detail the various stages and events in the development of an unborn baby from the time of its conception through its nine months in the womb. This information supports the Church's teaching that human life begins at conception.

Time

30–45 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, poster-making materials, a Bible

Procedure

An initial exercise/quiz, teacher input, student discussion and brainstorming activity, a small group poster-making activity.

Evaluation

The students' grasp of the significance of the material presented will be illustrated by the nature and content of the posters they develop. (Note: The teacher may wish to develop a formal quiz on the content of the student handout and give the quiz to the students at a later time.)

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

Window on the Womb (video)
Alfred Derby, MD
1115 Christmas Tree Lane
Spokane, WA 99203

When Life Begins (film)
McGraw-Hill Films
1221 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

First Days of Life (film/video)
FOR LIFE
PO Box 1279
Tyron, NC 28782

Living Proof: A Visual Encounter with the Unborn (video)
Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction
6901 Mercy Rd.
Omaha, NE 68106

Ultrasound: Eyewitness to the Earliest Days of Life (video)
Sound Wave Images, Inc.
2422 Harness
Union Lake, MI 48387

When You Were Formed in Secret (booklet)
Intercessors for America
PO Box 2639
Reston, PA 22090

Life Before Birth (filmstrip) or *Life Magazine* Reprint #27
Time-Life Multi-Media
100 Eisenhower Dr.
Paramus, NJ 07652

"The First Nine Months" (pamphlet)
Project Respect
Box 97
Golf, IL 60029

Lesson Two

Teacher Background

The First Nine Months of Human Life

The main focus of this lesson is the presentation of the stages of fetal development. Throughout the lesson, you will want to continually stress that, at every stage of development—from conception onward—we are dealing with a unique, immortal human being as described in Lesson One. All the uniqueness and gifts of a human person are present at each stage of growth. At no time are we simply dealing with a "glob of cells." The life force and blueprint for development contained in the mother's ovum and father's sperm cell are uniquely human from the time the two join. A human being's life begins at that time.

From their studies in earlier grades the students may have some familiarity with fetal development. Use the Fetal Development worksheet as a general guide but do not hesitate to go into more detail in describing the wonderful way in which the baby grows and develops daily and even hourly. The resources listed for this lesson can provide you with this kind of additional detail.

The most powerful and effective way to present the content of this lesson would be to use one of the suggested films or videos which record fetal development visually. The old adage, "One picture is worth a thousand words" is especially true in dealing with this topic. So, if at all possible, try to obtain one of the audiovisuals for use with this lesson. The more familiar the students become with the process of fetal development, the better they will be able to understand the Church's position—that at every stage of fetal development we are talking of a unique human person. It is in that light that the Church's teaching on abortion must be approached.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

- Begin class by distributing Handout 2.1, "What Do You Know?" Instruct students to complete the worksheet as best they can.

- After sufficient time, go over the worksheet, asking for volunteers to give their answers to the various items. Allow discussion when they disagree.

- After students have shared their answers, give the correct answers: (Only Items 5, 9, 13, and 14 should be marked with an 0. All others are qualities already present by the twelfth week of the baby's life in the womb.)

Present Main Ideas

- Now distribute Handout 2.2, "Human Development." Go over each item in turn, commenting as appropriate. Allow and invite students to ask questions throughout the process.

Explore Further

- If possible, arrange to show one of the fetal development films suggested in the Teacher Resources for this lesson. If this is not possible, do the following exercise.

- Divide class into two teams. Instruct teams to review the "Human Development" sheet together for a short time. Instruct teams that their "team captain" can keep the handout, but all others must put theirs aside. Now proceed to quiz each team in turn, by citing from the handout a particular aspect of human development (for example, arm and leg buds appear). Team must try to say during which trimester this development occurs. If they get it correct, they receive one point. If they can be more precise (25th day), they get two points. If they cannot get it at all, they must ask their team captain to look it up and answer for them. They receive no points. Continue in this way as time allows. Team with most points at the end "wins."

Apply

• State that one of the main reasons given to justify the practice of abortion is that what is being aborted is just a "glob of cells" or a "growth" within the mother, at least during the first twenty-four weeks of the pregnancy. Invite students to give as many facts as they can, based on what has been discussed so far, that challenge that notion. List these on the board as they are presented.

• Provide poster-making materials. Ask students, working alone (or in groups if you prefer), to attempt to develop a poster that expresses the idea that the baby is a human being from the time of conception. Have students present and explain their completed work. Display posters in class or around the school.

• Close class with prayer in the following manner. Ask a student to read Psalm 139:13–16. Invite the students to close their eyes and imagine themselves listening to the Psalm in a very small, warm, dark room. After the Psalm reading, ask students to keep their eyes closed and briefly reflect on how they themselves slowly developed within their mother's womb, and that God knew them and loved them from the moment of their conception just as God knows and loves them now. Conclude with the following prayer or a similar one of your choosing:

> *O God, who creates each of us in a truly marvelous and mysterious way, thank You for the life You gave me from the moment my mother conceived me. Please help pregnant women everywhere realize that they carry within them a unique human being who depends totally upon them for survival. Help all parents love and care for the children they bring into existence, starting from the time of conception. We ask this through Jesus, Your Son. Amen.*

Optional Home Activity

• Invite students to share the "Human Development" handout with their parents. Suggest that students ask their parents to share their memories of how they felt when they first realized that they were going to be parents.

Handout 2.1 What Do You Know?

Instructions: By the end of the third month (12 weeks), the baby living within its mother's womb is two inches long and weighs one ounce. Below are listed qualities the baby gradually acquires during the nine months between conception and birth. Mark with an X qualities the baby already has by the third month. Mark with an O qualities the baby will acquire between the fourth and ninth months.

_____ 1. The finger prints are completely formed, as well as fingernails and toenails.

_____ 2. The baby can swim and do flips.

_____ 3. The baby's heart is beating and circulating the baby's blood.

_____ 4. The baby can hear.

_____ 5. The baby can recognize it's mother's voice.

_____ 6. The baby can feel pain.

_____ 7. The baby can control its fingers and toes.

_____ 8. The baby can taste and digest.

_____ 9. The baby has a complete skeleton of bone.

_____10. The baby's facial features are formed: eyes, nose, ears, chin, and so on.

_____11. The baby has vocal chords and could cry if it were outside the womb.

_____12. The baby's brain controls various body functions and movements.

_____13. The baby can suck its thumb.

_____14. The baby's movements can be felt by its mother.

_____15. All of the baby's internal organs are formed and functioning.

The Catholic Church Teaches . . .
Catholic teaching holds that, regardless of the circumstances of its origin, human life is valuable from conception to death because God is the Creator of each human being, and because mankind has been redeemed by Jesus Christ. ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 4)

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Handout 2.2 Human Development

First Trimester (From conception to end of twelfth week—first 84 days)

From Conception: Human life begins when the father's sperm cell penetrates the mother's ovum and the DNA of the father unites with the DNA of the mother. At that moment, all the qualities necessary for the development of the person are present. Nothing new is added for the next nine months. Also, all the unique qualities the person inherits from the mother and father are present: sex, hair, eye and skin color, facial characteristics, adult size, even intelligence and inherited emotional traits. We are dealing with a unique human being at conception, unlike any other who has existed or who will ever exist.

Day One: Cell division begins within two to three hours after conception, a process that will be repeated over and over until, 266 days later, one fertilized cell smaller than a period like this (.) will have grown into a baby approximately seven pounds in weight and consisting of millions and millions of complex cells.

Day Seven: The growing baby, now consisting of approximately 126 cells, has left the fallopian tube and attaches itself to the wall of its mother's womb.

During Week Two: Certain of the baby's cells provide the basis for the development of the amniotic sac, the placenta, and the umbilical cord—the "life support systems" the baby will use during the next nine months to draw nurture from its mother.

During Week Three: Development begins to speed up.
By the 18th day, blood cells begin to form and the heart in rudimentary form begins a tentative beat.
By the 21st day, the brain, backbone, spinal column, and nervous system are forming.
The eyes have begun to form.
Simple kidneys, a liver, and a digestive tract are already taking shape.

By the End of Week Four: The baby is no larger than an apple seed, yet it is now 10,000 times larger than the fertilized ovum at conception.
The baby's heart begins to beat regularly by the 25th day and begins to circulate blood in the baby.
Arm and leg buds are already beginning to appear.
The internal organs, spinal cord, and nervous system are all observable.

Week Five: By day 30, ears and nasal organs begin to form.

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By day 33, fingers begin to appear, spinal vertebrae appear, nose, and upper jaw begin to form.
Eye color pigment is present.

By the End of Week Six: The internal ear is almost complete.
By the 42nd day, the skeleton, sill of cartilage, is complete and reflexes are present.
The baby will respond to touch when its lips are stroked.
The arms and legs are formed, including fingers and toes.
The baby is one-half inch long.

By the End of Week Eight: Brain waves can be recorded by the 43rd day.
Muscles have formed and are capable of reflex action.
All facial features are present and inherited family traits can be recognized.
Arm and leg segments are formed, as well as hands and feet, toe and fingers—complete with finger prints.
All organs are present and functioning, at least in rudimentary fashion.
The baby is capable of swimming and doing flips.
The baby is capable of feeling and reacts to touch.
The baby is probably capable of feeling pain by now.
The veins and arteries are functioning.
The baby's heart has been beating for over a month already—and the baby is just two months old!

Week Nine through Twelve: During the next 28 days, the baby develops rapidly and acquires many new qualities and abilities.
The baby begins to squint, swallow, and make a fist, and because its vocal cords are complete, the baby could cry if it were outside its mother's womb.
The baby can feel pain.
Fingernails and teeth are forming.
The baby inhales and exhales fluid in its lungs.
Jerky muscle movements now become fluid and graceful.
The baby literally begins to exercise its muscles by regular movements.
The baby's sex is clearly identifiable.
The baby can distinguish between sweet and sour.
The baby begins to sleep and waken, to hear, to drink, digest, and excrete.
Yet, by the end of this first twelve weeks (84 days) since conception, the baby is still less than three inches long and still weighs about one ounce. But it can hardly be described as a "glob of cells."

Second Trimester (Months four through Six—Days 85 to 178)

Month Four: By the end of month three, the baby is virtually complete in terms of all its "essential parts" and these parts are all functioning. All that is really

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left is some fine tuning and growth in size and weight. For example, during this fourth month, the baby grows to about half the length it will be at birth, but does not gain that much weight yet.
Hair begins to appear, including eyelashes and eyebrows.
The baby can begin to suck its thumb. Movements become more vigorous and the mother can begin to feel the baby move for the first time.
Taste buds and saliva glands appear and the palate fuses.
The baby begins to urinate regularly and will swallow from 250-700 cc. of liquids daily.

Months Five and Six: The baby will grow to about 14 inches by end of the sixth month.
Fat begins to accumulate under the skin.
The baby can recognize its mother's voice, will respond to music, and can distinguish light and dark.
The baby develops a regular sleeping and waking rhythm.
It is possible as early as during the fifth month for a baby to survive if it had to be removed from its mother's womb, provided it was given special medical help. In many cases, the baby definitely could survive outside the womb by the end of the sixth month with proper medical care. Yet, our present laws continue to allow abortion on demand up until the end of the sixth month of pregnancy!

Third Trimester (Months Seven through Nine—Days 179 to 266)

During these last months, growth, exercise, and sleep are the main events in the baby's development. The baby gains two thirds of its birth weight and close to half its total length during these last three months. Eventually, during the ninth month, the baby grows too large to be able to move around in the mother's womb and begins to position itself for birth. On the average, a baby will weigh seven pounds and be between nineteen and twenty-one inches long at birth.

Our growth, which began at the moment of conception, continues after we leave our mother's womb and will continue for about twenty-five years, at which time we reach full physical maturity. But we can continue to grow intellectually and spiritually throughout our entire life.

The Catholic Church Teaches . . .
Scientists tell us that, from the moment of conception, the child is a complete and rapidly growing being, endowed with the characteristics of human life. Although dependent on a privileged environment for development, the child in the womb has a life of its own. . . . The child in the womb is human. ("Declaration on Abortion," nos. 1, 4)

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Lesson Three
Overview

The Hard Facts about Abortion

Objective

The students will review the definition and nature of abortion, become familiar with the various methods used to perform abortions, and explore some consequences of abortion.

Summary

In this lesson, students will review the nature and consequences of present abortion practices in the United States. They will focus in a special way on the fact that each abortion destroys the life of a human being like themselves.

Time

30–45 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

A jar containing approximately 190 dry lima beans, student handouts, a Bible.

Procedure

An initial dynamic to illustrate the frequency of abortion in the United States; teacher input on the methods of abortion, supported by a student handout; brainstorming activity and the creation of an imaginary classmate activity

Evaluation

The degree to which the students enter into the final activity will illustrate if they have grasped the import of the main content of this lesson. (Note: The teacher may wish to develop a formal quiz on the material contained in the student handout presenting the factual material about abortion methods.)

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

Meet the Abortion Providers (video)
Pro-Life Action League
6160 N. Cicero
Chicago, IL 60646

Abortion—How It Is (Part II) (filmstrip)
Hayes Publishing
6304 Hamilton
Cincinnati, OH 45224

"Life or Death" (pamphlet—contains graphic pictures)
Hayes Publishing
6304 Hamilton
Cincinnati, OH 45224

The Story of Mary Jo (video)
Credence Cassettes
P.O. Box 419491
Kansas City, MO 64141–6491

A Matter of Choice (film/video)
American Portrait Films
1695 W. Crescent, Suite 500
Anaheim, CA 92801

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Lesson Three

Teacher Background

The Hard Facts about Abortion

This is the pivotal lesson of the Unit. Against the background of the first two lessons, the facts about abortion take on their full impact. The key facts to be presented are these: (1) abortion kills a human being after conception, either before it reaches its mother's womb or after it has begun to grow in the womb; (2) the mother also risks serious physical and emotional harm as the result of having an abortion; (3) abortion is never a good "solution" for a woman experiencing an unwanted pregnancy. (Note: You may want to divide the class into same-sex groupings when presenting this lesson, due to the nature of the content.)

That abortion kills becomes obvious enough when you review the methods used by abortionists. In going over the Abortion Methods worksheet for this lesson, be sensitive to the sensibilities of the age group. But do not gloss over the fact that every method of abortion has a brutal, life-killing quality to it. There is nothing humane about abortion when you focus on what is done to the developing human being in the mother's womb.

Likewise, in dealing with the risks to the mother, be "matter of fact." These risks are real and occur much more frequently than abortionists are usually willing to admit. Even when there are no serious physical side effects, there are often emotional wounds that can remain throughout the mother's entire life.

In this context, it is easy to make the point that abortion is never a good solution, no matter how difficult the present circumstances of the mother may be. There are better alternatives than killing the baby and risking the mother's health. It is our responsibility, as will be discussed in a later lesson, to help provide mothers with these alternatives.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

- Display a jar with approximately 190 lima beans in it. Pass the jar around so each student can handle it briefly. Then instruct students to guess how many beans are in the jar, write their guess on a slip of paper, put their name on it, and hand it in.

- When all slips are in, tell students the exact number of lima beans in the jar and ask if anyone got that number or one near it.

- Proceed to explain that a lima bean is the approximate size of an eight-week-old baby inside its mother's womb. Ask students to recall some of the characteristics and qualities a tiny eight-week-old baby already possesses, based on what was studied in the previous class. List these on the board as the students recall them.

- Finally, observe that those 190 lima beans represent the number of actual babies who will be killed by abortion during this class. (There are 4000 abortions daily in our country or about 190 abortions every hour.)

- Point out to the students that most people in the United States are vastly misinformed about abortion. Pass out Handout 3.1. Review with the students the statistics on the handout.

Present Main Ideas

- Distribute Handout 3.2, "Abortion Methods and Side Effect." Go over the material with the students, encouraging them to ask further questions. As you note the various kinds of abortion techniques, remind students to continually try to recall what they had learned previously about the developing baby in the mother's womb. Every abortion destroys **someone,** often a **someone** who is already highly developed, with all kinds of wonderful capacities, even when he or she is less than an inch long. Abortion does not destroy **something,** as supporters of abortion would like to think.

Also point out, as the handout explains, not only is a baby killed, but serious harm can often occur to the mother, a fact supporters of abortion do not like to talk about.

• You may wish to have students review the Human Development handout from the last class to help them visualize what is being talked about when it is said that a certain abortion technique is used at a certain time in the pregnancy.

Explore Further

• Distribute a lima bean to each student, along with Handout 3.3, "My Missing Classmate." Instruct students to do the worksheet, encouraging them to use their imagination and to be as specific as they wish. Insist, as necessary, that students approach this activity with a degree of reverence for those real babies who, in fact, were aborted at about the same time the students themselves were growing and developing inside their mothers.

• When students have completed the worksheet, review their response sheets, and then invite them to "introduce their classmate" to the class. Comment and commend as appropriate.

Apply

• Invite the students, in a brainstorming fashion, to identify some of the best memories they already have from their short lives, and some of the things they presently find most enjoyable in their lives *that they wish their imaginary classmate could have lived to experience.* List these on the board.

• Observe that every abortion denies **someone** the opportunity to enjoy these experiences and all the other joys and wonders of being alive and being allowed to grow up.

• Lead into the closing prayer by asking the students to pause and quiet down in preparation for listening to a Scripture reading. Ask a student to read Proverbs 24:11–14. Invite students to pray silently for those babies who were aborted about the time the students themselves were growing in their mothers' womb.

Summarize the silent prayer with this, or a similar prayer, read aloud:

> *Spirit of Truth, enlighten all those who still do not understand the true nature of abortion as the destruction of a unique, human being. Spirit of Life, help us appreciate the gift of life we have received. Spirit of Wisdom, teach our leaders and us how we can overcome the evil of abortion in our society. Spirit of Mercy, forgive those who for whatever reason may have resorted to abortion as a solution to their problems. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Optional Home Activities

- Invite students to share and discuss the "Abortion Methods and Side Effects" study sheet with their parents.

Handout 3.1 Getting It Straight: Facts about Abortion

- Forty-seven percent of U.S. citizens think that less than 500,000 abortions are performed annually. The real number of abortions each year is **1.6 million.**

- U.S. citizens think that 21 percent of the abortions performed are for cases of rape or incest and that 16 percent are done because the mother's life is in danger. The fact is, **less than 1 percent** of all the abortions performed are done as a result of incest and rape, and **only 7 percent** are done as the result of a "health problem."

- 60 percent of U.S. citizens think that all human life, including the unborn, should be protected, and 60 percent believe that every unborn child has a basic right to life.

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Handout 3.2 Abortion Methods

Definition: Abortion, as described in this handout, refers to the intentional removal of the developing human being from the mother's womb before he/she can live outside the womb, thereby killing the baby.

Methods During the First Three Months of the Baby's Life

1. *Suction Aspiration.* The mouth or cervix of the mother's womb is stretched open. An instrument called a suction curette, which is a hollow tube with a knife-like top, is inserted into the womb. Strong suction is used to tear the baby into pieces. The pieces are sucked from the mother's womb into a jar for disposal. This is the most popular method during the first the very early stages of pregnancy only—up to six weeks.

2. *Dilatation and Curettage* (also referred to as D and C). The main difference between Dilatation and Curettage and suction aspiration is that, during a D and C, a loop-shaped steel knife is used to cut the baby away from the wall of the mother's womb and cut it into pieces. The pieces are then removed by suction into a jar or other container for disposal. This is the most used of all abortion methods, and will be used at any time during the first thirteen weeks of pregnancy.

3. *The Abortion Pill—RU-486.* RU-486 is an abortion-inducing drug intended to destroy life. It is prescribed by a doctor and is taken with synthetic hormone injections. In France, where RU-486 was developed, a woman must go to a clinic to receive the drug and to take synthetic hormone injections, amounting to at least three visits to the clinic. Evidence exists to indicate that the drug is not perfectly safe. In light of the safety concerns, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has banned importation of RU-486 for personal use.

Methods After the Baby is Three Months Old

1. *Dilatation and Evacuation.* After the mouth of the womb has been sufficiently stretched open, specially designed tools are inserted which dismember the baby's body and crush its skull. The body pieces are then removed by using a ring forceps. There is no nice way to describe this method. The baby is literally crushed and sliced into small pieces and removed with forceps. There is strong evidence that the baby experiences pain and attempts to escape the abortionist's tools during this kind of abortion. Because of the baby's advanced development, this method is not used after the baby has reached four and a half months of age.

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2. *Saline Injection.* For babies older than four and a half months, a salt solution is injected into the sac where the baby lives inside the mother's womb. The baby inhales and swallows this poisonous solution. It causes the baby to experience convulsions and internal hemorrhaging. The baby usually dies after about two hours but some have been known to remain alive much longer. In other words, the baby's death is a slow process. The mother then goes into labor and delivers a dead (or dying) baby within twenty-four to forty-eight hours after the injection.

Effects on the Mother Who has an Abortion

The mother who has an abortion risks experiencing the following physical and emotional harm as a result of the abortion:

1. *Hemorrhaging.* This can lead to death if appropriate medical assistance is not provided. Many abortion clinics are not equipped to treat hemorrhaging.

2. *Infections affecting the womb and other reproductive organs.* Since abortion is a surgical procedure, all the risks of infection associated with surgery are present.

3. *Damage to the cervix or mouth of the womb.* The instruments used must unnaturally stretch the cervix to have access to the baby.

4. *Perforation of the womb.* The tools inserted in the womb to destroy the baby are very sharp and always pose some degree of danger to the mother.

5. *Perforation of the bowel.* The reason is the same as in number 4.

6. *Complications during pregnancy and/or the inability to have a healthy baby in subsequent pregnancies.* Many women who have had abortions experience such problems.

7. *Post-Abortion Syndrome.* Various forms of emotional trauma that require professional counseling—such as guilt, depression, anger, sleep disorder, recurring nightmares, grief, and suicidal tendencies. These are much more common than the promoters of abortion are often willing to admit. Some of the woman's most basic natural instincts seem to be contradicted by the experience of an abortion.

In summary, an abortion kills a baby, and it often does serious harm to the mother, a fact the supporters of abortion seldom discuss.

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The Sin of Abortion

Abortion is and has always been considered a serious violation of God's law. Those who obtain an abortion, those who persuade others to have an abortion, and those who perform the abortion procedures are guilty of breaking God's law. Moreover, in order to emphasize the special evil of abortion, under Church law, those who undergo or perform an abortion place themselves in a state of excommunication. ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 7)

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Handout 3.3 My New Classmate

Instructions: Imagine that the lima bean you are holding represents an eight-week-old baby who had been aborted about the same time you yourself were eight weeks old in your mother's womb. That aborted baby could have been your classmate. Complete the following form as this classmate might have completed it if he/she had been allowed to live and were a member of your class.

Name _____ Sex ____ Date of Birth __ - __ - __

Height _____ Weight _____ Hair Color _____ Eye Color _____

1. List your special talents/skills.

2. List your personal hobbies/interests.

3. Describe what you hope to become as an adult.

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Lesson Four
Overview

Abortion and Human Rights

Objective

The students will identify the reason why the pro-choice defense of abortion, which defends only the mother's rights, is inconsistent and ignores the most fundamental right of her baby—namely, the right to life.

Summary

In this lesson, the pro-choice defense of the woman's right to abortion is examined. The moral inconsistencies of this defense are identified, the most basic being the fact that it ignores the baby's right to life, the most fundamental of all human rights.

Time

30–45 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, a Bible

Procedure

Initial activity focusing on law and human rights, teacher input, a Case Study worksheet activity, small group activity to develop a 30-second TV ad challenging the pro-choice position

Evaluation

The students' responses in the Case Study activity and the content they present in the TV ad activity will illustrate if they have grasped the key ideas of this lesson.

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

Mother Tiger, Mother Tiger (film)
Paulist Productions
PO Box 1057
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

A Day in the Life of Bonnie Consolo (film)
Barr Films
3490 East Foothill Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91107

"Their Lives—A Single Issue?" (pamphlet)
National Right to Life
Education Trust
419 7th Street NW, Suite 402
Washington, DC 20004

No Alibis (video)
B.A.M. Distributors
PO Box 3207
Reston, VA 22090

Abortion the Time Is Now (video)
Don Bosco Multimedia
475 North Avenue, Box T
New Rochelle, NY 10802

"The Pre-Term Baby" (pamphlet)
Easton Publishing
PO Box 1064
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Abortion, It's Legal, Common and Wrong (video)
Don Bosco Multimedia
475 North Avenue, Box T
New Rochelle, NY 10802

Lesson Four

Teacher Background

Abortion and Human Rights

This age group has a strong sense of fairness and justice. Therefore, it is relatively easy to demonstrate to them that abortion is always unjust treatment of the unborn child. Every human being, possessing the dignity and freedom of a child of God, has certain inalienable rights, the most fundamental being the right to life.

Of all the rights which society has the duty to protect, the right to life is the most basic. Society has a special duty to protect the lives of those least able to care for themselves: babies and small children, persons who are mentally and physically disabled, the feeble elderly. It takes no great logic to recognize that the most vulnerable and least able to protect themselves are the unborn.

Stated most simply, abortionists claim that a mother has the right to decide if she will allow the baby growing within her to live or die. Most abortionists attempt to justify this claim by maintaining that, until late in the pregnancy, the baby growing with the mother is not yet a human being and hence has no rights. This position is contradicted by all that we now know about the unique life and development which the baby experiences from conception onward. The Church has always maintained that the mother carries within her a new human being from conception onward—a human being with all the dignity and rights of a human being, to begin with—the right to life. "Scientists tell us that, from the moment of conception, the child is a complete and rapidly growing being, endowed with the characteristics of human life. Although dependent on a privileged environment for development, the child in the womb has a life of its own. . . . The child in the womb is human. ("Declaration on Abortion," nos. 1, 4)

The statistics presented in the Facts worksheet contained in this lesson also challenge the reasons abortionists use to justify abortion, such as hardship and the risk to the mother. More than 90 percent of all abortions, for example, are classified as "abortions of social convenience." Neither the mother's life or health

is at risk, nor does the baby have severe defects. It is hard to justify the mother's right to kill the baby within her simply because having the baby would be "embarrassing" or "inconvenient."

Granted, in many cases, mothers who seek an abortion would face serious problems, usually emotional and/or economic, if they carry the baby to term. But such problems do not give the mother the right to kill the baby within her. There are other ways to solve these problems which can protect both the baby and the mother. Adoption, which is good in and of itself, is, for example, also a beneficial alternative to abortion, but too often today, it is ignored as an alternative.

In challenging the claims which abortionists use to justify abortion—either as a right of the mother or as a necessity to solve a problem—be careful not to foster among the students the stereotype that abortion advocates are ruthless people. We are not in a position to make that kind of judgement. Nor does it help promote the pro-life movement. It is better to presume that most abortion advocates probably believe that abortion is not the destruction of a human being, but is only the removal of a "growth" within the mother which has not yet become human. Therefore, explain to your students that the real challenge is to strive to help abortion advocates and society at large to recognize, through dialogue and education, the errors in their thinking. The use of labels like "murderer" and "baby killer" won't help achieve that goal.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

- List on the board the following "signs":

  No Loitering
  No Running in Pool Area
  Handicapped Parking Only
  No Dogs Allowed In Park
  No Skateboarding in this Area

- Invite students to give examples of other similar signs that restrict our actions. Add these to the list. Then ask this questions "Do you think laws like this take away our human rights? Or are such laws necessary for our protection and the protection of others?" After students have shared their opinions, summarize the discussion by observing that governments have the obligation to protect the rights of *all* citizens. In doing so, governments can restrict certain actions of individuals in order to protect the common good of all citizens. Having made this point, proceed to a presentation of the main ideas of the lesson.

Present Main Ideas

- Explain that one of the major reasons given to justify legalized abortion is that outlawing abortion would violate the mother's rights to decide how to deal with her own body and how she wishes to live her life. (A woman is free to live her life, but if she has sexual intercourse, she has to be prepared for pregnancy.) Observe that the major inconsistency of this argument, of course, is that the unborn baby's right to life is totally ignored in the process. The unborn are human beings whose right to life supersedes all other rights.

- Explain that governments can and do pass many laws that restrict individual freedoms to some degree in order to protect the common good and even the good of the individual who is thus restricted. Cite examples, such as laws against the use of various drugs like cocaine, and no smoking laws intended to protect the health of non-smokers.

• Proceed to explain that efforts to make abortion illegal do not take away a woman's legitimate rights. The mother does **not** have the right to choose whether or not she will kill her baby after it is born. If we are to be consistent, we must also say that the mother has no right to choose whether or not to kill her unborn baby. Therefore, laws which would restrict abortion would not take away the mother's legitimate rights but would protect the rights of the unborn baby who, under present laws, is being denied the most fundamental of all rights, the right to life.

• Point out to the students that in the U.S. unborn babies are denied this most fundamental of all rights—the right to life—because legally they are not regarded as persons. In the case of *Roe v. Wade* (January, 1973), the Supreme Court ruled that the unborn are not legal "persons." Because "legal personhood does not exist prenatally," according to the decision, the unborn are not due protection under the U.S. Constitution.

• Tell students that the concept of "person" comes out of an understanding of what a human being is. Point out how unfair it is to exclude some classes of human beings from personhood in order to deny them their human rights.

• Tell the students that on March 6, 1857, the Supreme Court reached a similar decision regarding slaves. In the landmark *Dred Scott* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that those who were slaves were not "legal persons" according to the U.S. Constitution. But were, rather, property of their owners. Therefore, a slave could be bought and sold—even killed—according to an owner's wishes.

• Pass out Handout 4.1 to show students the legal comparisons that exist between slavery and abortion.

The other major argument which supporters of abortion use to justify its legality is the claim that abortions often solve serious problems that the mother and even the baby might otherwise experience. Having explained this argument, distribute Handout 4.2, "Abortion Facts." Go over the information included on the handout, elaborating as necessary. Stress the point

that abortion is rarely used as the only possible solution to an otherwise very difficult or life-threatening situation. In almost all cases, other alternatives could be used which would spare the baby and still respect the needs of the mother.

Explore Further

• Distribute Handout 4.3, "Case Studies." Ask students to complete the worksheet. After sufficient time, invite students to share their responses from the baby. Comment appropriately, helping students to clarify and refine their ideas.

Apply

• Form students into small groups. Explain that each group is to imagine itself as an advertising company given the task of developing a 30-second TV commercial intended to help the public understand that legalized abortion denies unborn babies the most fundamental of all human rights, the right to life.

Allow sufficient time for the groups to complete the task. Groups share results by presenting the "script" they would use and by explaining what visuals they would use to support their point. After all groups have made their presentation, let students decide which of the commercials they consider the best.

• Close session by asking a student to read from the Gospel of John, 15:9–17. Allow some time for quiet reflection. Conclude with this or a similar prayer:

> *O God, You who call us to love one another as You love us, help our nation come to realize that the unborn baby is a real person with real rights. Help our nation and help us to care for both the mothers and their unborn babies in such a way that everyone's rights as human beings are protected. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Your Son. Amen.*

Optional Home Activity

• Invite students to take home the "Abortion Facts" sheet and share it with their parents. Ask students to inquire how their parents feel about the idea that outlawing abortion would take away a mother's right to choose.

Handout 4.1 The Court Decides: 1857 and 1973

1857—Slavery

Dred Scott Decision (7–2)

Slaves are not legal persons.
Slaves are property of their owners.
Owners can buy, sell, or kill slaves.
Slavery is legal.

1973—Abortion

Roe v. Wade Decision (7–2)

The unborn are not legal persons.
The unborn are property of their mothers.
Mothers can keep or kill unborn children.
Abortion is legal.

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Handout 4.2 Abortion Facts

1. In 1973, the Supreme Court decision entitled *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion for any reason during the full nine months of pregnancy. Since that date, 26 million (26,000,000) unborn children have been "legally" killed in the United States.

2. Each year, 1.6 million (1,600,000) babies are killed by abortion in the United States.

3. Each day, 4000 babies are killed by abortion in the United States. That's approximately 190 babies every hour.

4. Approximately 92 percent of the abortions performed each year are done for reasons of "social convenience." Less than 8 percent are performed because the mother's life is in danger or because she was a victim of rape or incest.

5. The majority (59.2 percent) of mothers who have abortions are between ages 15–24. The majority (66.4 percent) of mothers who have abortions are from white, middle-class families.

6. Seventy-two and eight-tenths percent of all abortions are performed on unmarried mothers.

7. For every 1000 babies born in the United States, 356 are killed by voluntary abortion before birth.

8. Forty-five percent of those who seek an abortion have had a previous abortion.

9. Approximately 45 percent of all abortions are performed after the baby has lived in its mother's womb more than eight weeks and is clearly recognizable as a human being.

10. Ninety-three percent of all abortions performed use the suction or Dilatation and Curettage (D and C) method, which involves cutting the baby into pieces within the womb.

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The child in the womb is human. Abortion is unjust destruction of a human life, and morally that is murder. . . . Abortion, the destruction of a living human being in the womb of its mother, is morally wrong. No law or judicial opinion can change the moral judgment. We are convinced that the decision of the Supreme Court is wrong and must be reversed. ("Declaration on Abortion," no. 4; "Resolution on the Pro-Life Constitutional Amendment," no. 1)

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Handout 4.3 Case Studies

Instructions: Below are two typical examples of a mother's reason for wanting to have an abortion. Read the mother's comments and then write a response which the baby about to be aborted might give to his or her mother.

I. Mother: I'm sixteen and two months pregnant. Having a baby will embarrass my family. I'll have to drop out of school for a while and maybe I won't be able to go to college like I had planned. I have the right to pursue my plans for my life. I have the right to an abortion.

Baby's Response:

II. Mother: I'm poor and three months pregnant. My husband has abandoned me. I already have three children to care for. Having another baby now will limit my ability to work and earn money. I have the right to a decent life and so do my three children. Having a baby now would take that right away from me. I need an abortion.

Baby's Response:

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Lesson Five
Overview

Respect for Human Life

Objective

The students will relate the pro-life movement to the Church's concern for the rights and dignity of all human beings as expressed in the Church's in its "consistent ethic of life" teaching, a teaching based upon the fundamental right to life.

Summary

In this lesson the students will explore the Church's teaching regarding a consistent life ethic. Students will consider how the pro-life movement supports the fundamental right put forth by this teaching—the right to life.

Time

30–45 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, a Bible

Procedure

Initial worksheet activity, teacher input, brainstorming activity, and final worksheet activity

Evaluation

The final worksheet activity will illustrate if the students have been able to make the connection between pro-life activities and the Church's "consistent ethic of life" teaching.

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

A Day in the Life of America (video)
AIMS Media
6901 Woodley Ave.
Van Nuys, CA 91406

"100 Years of Catholic Social Teaching" (pamphlet)
Catholic Update Reprints
St. Anthony Messenger
1615 Republic
Cincinnati, OH 45210

Option for the Poor (film/video)
Paulist Productions
PO Box 1057
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

"Human Life in Our Day," no. 5

"Human Life in Our Day," no 83

"Statement on Abortion," no. 5, April 17, 1969

"The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," no. 284

"Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 4

Lesson Four

Teacher Background

Respect for Human Life

The aim of this session is to help students view the abortion issue as the fundamental and foundational issue within the larger context of a consistent ethic of life. The main principle underlying a consistent ethic of life is that we need to be concerned about the rights and dignity of all human beings, not just some. Ignoring or abusing the rights and dignity of one group of people presents a potential threat to all people. Therefore, to become effective in opposing the practice of abortion we need to support human rights and human dignity for all human beings. We need to learn to act out of a consistent life ethic.

Moreover, the lesson will also affirm that chastity, which is rooted in a respect for sexuality and its life-giving purpose, is essential to a consistent life ethic. Those who truly value life value their sexuality and its life-giving power. They recognize the need for chastity, which they practice and promote.

Thus, closely connected with the struggle against abortion are other justice issues—such as, concern for the poor, the elderly, persons who are handicapped, and racial minority groups. Opposition to the violence and killing that takes place in abortion needs to be closely related to our opposition to violence and killing in all its forms, including war.

There are two reasons for connecting the pro-life movement with a consistent life ethic. The first is philosophical, dealing with consistency and credibility. To oppose abortion while supporting nuclear war or policies that promote racial or economic oppression is contradictory. The Gospel promotes the rights and dignity of all persons, not just selected groups. We can't pick and choose in the pursuit of justice, supporting some groups while ignoring or even oppressing others.

The second reason to connect the pro-life movement with a consistent life ethic is pragmatic. Those who promote abortion often justify the practice because of the poverty or other effects of social injustice experienced by the mothers who seek abortions. Thus, by striving to eliminate the effects of social injustices,

we can help eliminate at least one of the reasons given to justify many abortions.

In broadening the students' perspective, it is important to make it clear that abortion, both because of its always deadly effect and because of the sheer numbers of abortions performed each year, is a very urgent, life-and-death issue. It deserves the students' full commitment and concern. But this commitment to the pro-life movement does need to be carried out within the broader context of a consistent life ethic as taught by our bishops.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Form students into small groups. Distribute Handout 5.1, "National Budget," to each group and ask the groups to do the exercise.

• After groups have completed their task, invite them to share their results. Allow groups to challenge one another, provided they give reasons for the challenge.

• Conclude by observing that the exercise is intended to illustrate a critical point. It is actually impossible to justify denying the human rights of one group on the basis that other groups are more deserving. Use this point as the lead-in to your presentation of the main ideas of the lesson.

Present Main Ideas

• Explain the close connection that exists between promoting the rights of the unborn and protecting the rights of all groups, especially those who are unable to care for themselves effectively. We are called upon to be consistent in our moral standards, which is the key point in the Church's "consistent life ethic" teaching. It is inconsistent to promote the rights of the unborn but turn our back on the oppression which minorities experience. It is inconsistent to be opposed to the violence of abortion but remain indifferent to other forms of violence present in our society.

However, further explain that the "right to life" is the fundamental and foundational right, the condition upon which all other rights are based. "Hence it must be protected above all others" ("Declaration on Abortion," no. 11, November 18, 1974).

Be sure to also make the point that the abortion issue deserves a very high priority on our list of concerns because it is quite literally a life-and-death issue. Direct abortion is a moral species of murder. Remind students that 4000 babies are killed by abortion every day in our country alone. But also stress that the Church makes it clear that while we must be concerned about abortion, we must also be concerned about other injustices.

Explore Further

• Ask students to develop, in brainstorming fashion, a list of the rights that all people, including the unborn, have which we as a society have the obligation to respect and protect. List these on the board as they are presented. Remind the students that the right to life is the fundamental right, the condition upon which all other rights are based.

• Using the list developed, now ask students if they can give examples of groups of people who are presently being deprived in our society of one or another of these rights—either because of unjust laws or simply because of certain social practices and customs in our country.

• Point out to the students that the Church teaches that all human life is sacred and that God has given people the privilege and responsibility of protecting life. The Church teaches that ". . . whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or wilful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person . . . all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society. . . . Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator" ("Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," no. 27).

• Tell the students that the Church wants them to develop a consistent ethic of life. A consistent ethic of life is held by someone who has an attitude of total reverence for life. Pass out Handout 5.2 to the students. Assign readings as indicated on the handout. Have the group read the sheet aloud.

Apply

• Distribute copies of Handout 5.3, "Making Connections." Students are to work alone initially. After all have completed the task, instruct students to compare results with others in small groups. Finally, invite volunteers to share their results with the entire class. Comment, providing clarifications as needed.

• Close lesson by asking a student to read from Matthew's Gospel, 25:34–40. After the reading, ask

students to reflect quietly on this question: "How sensitive am I to the needs of those around me?" Conclude with the following or a similar prayer of your own wording:

> *Dear God, You love all Your children equally and with the same deep personal and abiding love. Help us to treat all persons as our brothers and sisters, including the unborn babies, and give us the wisdom and courage to do all in our power to respect and protect the rights of all persons everywhere. We ask this in the name of Jesus Your Son. Amen.*

Optional Home Activity

• Invite students to find out, with their parents' help, the various justice and peace efforts which their parish is presently supporting, in addition to the pro-life movement. Encourage students to discuss with their parents whether they as a family could become involved in one of those efforts.

Handout 5.1 National Budget

Instructions: You are members of the national budget committee and you have been told that you have to cut government services to three of the groups of people listed below. Discuss and decide which three groups you will eliminate from government programs. Put an X in front of each group you eliminate. Be prepared to defend your choices.

1. The homeless
2. Persons who are mentally disabled
3. Medical care for pregnant women living below the poverty level
4. AIDS victims
5. Equal rights programs for racial minorities
6. The elderly
7. Persons who are physically handicapped
8. Relief programs for famine victims in third world countries
9. Drug rehabilitation treatment programs

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Handout 5.2 Choose Life! (Deuteronomy 30:19)

All: "Today I set before you death and life. . . . Choose life!"

Reader 1: We honor God when we reverence human life. When human life is served, man is enriched and God is acknowledged. When human life is threatened, man is diminished and God is less manifest in our midst. ("Human Life in Our Day," no. 5)

All: "Today I set before you death and life. . . . Choose life!"

Reader 2: Let society always be on the side of life. Let it never dictate, directly or indirectly, recourse to the prevention of life or to its destruction in any of its phases. . . . (Human life in Our Day, no. 83)

All: "Today I set before you death and life. . . . Choose life!"

Reader 3: . . . . Society has an obligation to safeguard the life of every person from the very beginning of that life, and to perfect a legal-political system that assures protection to the individual and the well-being of the community. ("Statement on Abortion," no. 5, April 17, 1969)

All: "Today I set before you death and life. . . . Choose life!"

Reader 4: . . . No society can live in peace with itself, or with the world, without a full awareness of the worth and dignity of every human life (Jas 4:1–2). When we accept violence in any form as commonplace, our sensitivities become dulled. When we accept violence, war itself can be taken for granted.

All: "Today I set before you death and life. . . . Choose life!"

Reader 5: Violence has many faces: oppression of the poor, deprivation of basic human rights, economic exploitation, sexual exploitation and pornography, neglect or abuse of the aged and the helpless, and innumerable other acts of inhumanity. ("The

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Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," no. 284)

All: "Today I set before you death and life. . . . Choose life!"

Reader 6: Abortion in particular blunts a sense of the sacredness of human life. In a society where the innocent unborn are killed wantonly, how can we expect people to feel righteous at the act or threat of killing noncombatants in war? ("The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," no. 284)

All: "Today I set before you death and life. . . . Choose life!"

Reader 7: Catholic teaching holds that, regardless of the circumstances of its origin, human life is valuable from conception to death because God is the Creator of each human being, and because mankind has been redeemed by Jesus Christ. ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 4)

All: "Today I set before you death and life. . . . Choose life!"

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Handout 5.3 Making Connections

Instructions: Below are listed various groups who have special needs. Imagine that we could meet all of these needs, at least to a large degree. Indicate how much you think the meeting of each of these needs would also help eliminate abortion.

1. The homeless

Help very much 5 4 3 2 1 No help

2. Persons who are mentally disabled

Help very much 5 4 3 2 1 No help

3. Medical care for pregnant women living below the poverty level

Help very much 5 4 3 2 1 No help

4. AIDS victims

Help very much 5 4 3 2 1 No help

5. Equal rights programs for racial minorities

Help very much 5 4 3 2 1 No help

6. Persons who are elderly

Help very much 5 4 3 2 1 No help

7. Persons who are physically handicapped

Help very much 5 4 3 2 1 No help

8. Relief programs for famine victims in third world countries

Help very much 5 4 3 2 1 No help

9. Drug rehabilitation treatment programs

Help very much 5 4 3 2 1 No help

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Lesson Six
Overview

Choose Life!

Objective

The students will identify practical ways in which they can become involved in the pro-life movement.

Summary

In this lesson, the students will find out that the pro-life movement does much more than oppose abortion. The students will explore various ways in which the pro-life movement seeks to provide persons with access to alternatives to abortion and to assist persons with problem pregnancies both during pregnancy and after the birth of the child. The students will also consider ways in which they can become involved in the pro-life movement.

Time

30–45 minutes.

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, a Bible

Procedure

An initial worksheet activity, teacher input, a review of the various pro-life organizations and their activities, a final worksheet for identifying ways for students to become involved in the pro-life movement

Evaluation

The kinds of activities that the students identify for both group and personal involvement will illustrate their grasp of their responsibility and willingness to assume a role in the pro-life movement.

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

You Can Make a Difference (video)
Franciscan Communications
1229 South Santee
Los Angeles, CA 90015

White Star Garage (film)
Paulist Productions
PO Box 1057
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

"We Are the People Who Believe in Life" (pamphlet)
Catholic Update Reprints
St. Anthony Messenger
1615 Republic
Cincinnati, OH 45210

Lesson Six Choose Life!

Teacher Background

The aim of this final lesson is to help students identify ways in which the Church seeks to promote alternatives to abortion and provides assistance to mothers who might be tempted to seek an abortion as a solution to an unwanted pregnancy. The Church is also concerned for those mothers who, for whatever reason, have had abortions and now suffer the physical and emotional consequences of their decision.

Many pregnant women face very real and very serious problems. These women are most vulnerable to viewing abortion as a viable solution to pregnancy and childbirth. Many are unmarried teenagers, mere children themselves. Some are poor and have little or no means of supporting a child. Some anticipate the birth of a handicapped child. The Church views all these women with compassion and concern. It seeks to reach out to them, not only with spiritual and emotional support, but also with practical financial and medical assistance. The Church actively promotes adoption as a good in and of itself—good for the birth mother (although difficult), good for the child, good for the adoptive parents—and also as an alternative to abortion, especially for the babies of unmarried young mothers, and provides a wide network of adoption services.

The Church is equally concerned for the suffering of mothers who have had an abortion. Many, especially young unmarried mothers, made their decision during a time of great confusion, fear, and emotional stress. Often they did not fully understand what an abortion involves—both for their child and for themselves. They did not realize that alternatives and help were available to them. The church seeks to help these mothers who, after the fact, often experience the painful effects of post-abortion syndrome.

At the same time it is important to stress that one way of promoting the pro-life position is to promote chastity. Fifty percent of all abortions are sought by young unwed women. The need for these abortions could be eliminated by the practice of chastity. Those

who truly value life value sexuality and its life-giving power. They show their reverence for life by promoting and practicing chastity. It is the best alternative to abortion prior to pregnancy.

It is important that the students understand this often unpublicized dimension of the pro-life movement. The Church and other pro-life groups are providing viable options to abortion throughout the country. Too often, the media focuses on and tends to sensationalize the more public demonstrations, protests, and encounters between pro-life supporters and abortion advocates. The fact is that there are thousands of groups and organizations throughout the country reaching out to help women, both during and after pregnancy, with counseling, medical and financial assistance, adoption services, and so forth.

So the pro-life movement involves much more than concern and compassion for the unborn baby. It includes equal concern and compassion for the mother both during and after her pregnancy. Thus, in challenging the students to make a commitment to support and become involved in the pro-life movement, which is a major goal of this Unit, it is critical that you help them recognize the full scope of this movement. It includes bringing Christ's love and concern to both baby and mother.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

- Form class into small groups. Distribute Handout 6.1, "They Need Our Help." Instruct groups to work together to complete the worksheet.

- After sufficient time, invite groups to share their work. Comment and add your own observations as needed.

Present Main Ideas

- In your presentation, stress two key ideas. First, many mothers do experience very real problems because of their pregnancy, which can tempt them to consider abortion as a possible solution. We, therefore, need to be sensitive to these problems and strive to offer all the help that we can. Second, the Church and other concerned groups in society are seeking to help such mothers both during and after their pregnancy.

- In general terms, explain that such help includes counseling to help mothers recognize the alternatives to abortion that they do have. It includes seeking to provide medical care and financial assistance. It includes providing adoption services for both healthy and "hard-to-place" infants.

In addition, the Church seeks to reach out with compassion and with counseling to those mothers who suffer the effects of post-abortion syndrome: guilt, depression, suicidal tendencies, and so forth.

This is also the time to point out that 50 percent of all abortions are sought by young unwed women. The need for these abortions could be eliminated by the practice of chastity. It is the best alternative to abortion prior to pregnancy.

Explore Further

- Distribute Handout 6.2, "National Pro-Life Organizations." Go over the sheet together. In addition, identify local groups and organizations that are involved in one or other of these pro-life services.

Note: Your diocesan Pro-Life office can provide you with a list of local groups and organizations. It may even be able to provide you with a list of speakers who could come and explain in more detail the services of these organizations.

Apply

• Distribute Handout 6.3, "What Can I Do?" In brainstorming fashion, have students attempt to identify practical things they might be able to do, either individually or as a class, in each category listed on the worksheet. Students are to write these ideas down on their worksheet.

• Invite class as a group to identify one action they will do as a class. Decide together on a time for planning to carry out this action.

• Then ask each student to identify one action he or she will undertake personally.

• Conclude this lesson by asking a student to read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. Invite students to reflect quietly and pledge to God that they will work in the way they decided as a proof of their commitment to the pro-life movement. Finally, invite students to offer spontaneous prayers of petition related to their commitment to the pro-life movement.

Optional Home Activities

• If you plan to give a test on *Choose Life: Unborn Children and the Right to Life,* instruct students to prepare for it and to ask their parents to assist them in reviewing the material presented.

• Encourage students to explain to their parents their personal action pledge and to ask their parents to help them as necessary to follow through on it.

Handout 6.1 They Need Our Help

Instructions: Listed below are "real life" cases of women or couples who view their pregnancy as a problem. Each chooses to reject abortion and to have the baby. Discuss in your group and identify the kinds of help each of these will need from the Church and/or community as a result of their decision.

1. An unwed sixteen-year-old girl from a middle-class family

2. A couple who have been informed that their baby will be born with serious, untreatable physical and mental disabilities

3. A mother on welfare who already has three young children and whose husband has recently abandoned her

4. A young girl who has conceived as a result of a rape

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Handout 6.2

Code: A = political action/lobbying
B = public education
C = direct service

National Pro-Life Organizations

National Right to Life Committee, Inc.
419 7th Street, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20004 A, B, C

Right to Life Education Committee
920 Cherry, SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506 B

Christian Action Council
701 W. Broad Street
Falls Church, VA 22046 A, B, C

Americans Against Abortion
Box 70
Lindale, TX 75771 A, B, C

National Pro-Family Coalition
721 Second Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002 A, B

Americans United for Life
343 S. Dearborn, Suite 1804
Chicago, IL 60604 A, B

Crises Pregnancy Counseling Programs

Alternatives to Abortion, International
(AAI)
46 N. Broadway
Yonkers, NY 10701

Bethany Christian Services
Telephone 800-BETHANY

Birthright International
Telephone 800–848-LOVE

Family Life Service/Save a Baby
Telephone 800–368–3336

Post-Abortion Counseling and Adoption Services

WEBA (Women Exploited by Abortion)
PO Box 267
Schoolcraft, MI 49087

Pregnancy Aftermath Helpline
4742 N. Sheffield Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53211

Project Rachel
National Office of Post-Abortion
Reconciliation and Healing
3501 So. Lake Drive
PO Box 07477
Milwaukee, WI 53207–0477

Associations

Adoption Option
PO Box 429327
Cincinnati, OH 45242
(513) 793–7268

American Life League, Inc.
PO Box 1350
Stafford, VA 22554

National Teens for Life
2785 High Peak Rd.
Rhinelander, WI 54501

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National Committee for Adoption
2025 M Street, NW
Suite 512
Washington, DC 20036

Bethany Christian Services
901 Eastern Ave., NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

The American Adoption Agency
1611 Connecticut Ave., NW
Third Floor
Washington, DC 20009

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Handout 6.3 What Can I Do?

Instructions: Below are listed several categories of actions you can undertake personally, or as a group, to help promote the pro-life movement. In each category, list as many practical actions as you can identify. Choose one together as a class project. Choose another as a personal project.

I. Promote chastity as the means of avoiding crises pregnancies.

II. Join and participate in a pro-life organization.

III. Promote alternatives for mothers experiencing a problem pregnancy.

IV. Work for the repeal of the present abortion laws.

V. Pray.

VI. Become better informed personally.

VII. Help inform others about the true nature of abortion.

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Appendix: Fetal Development Visuals

The visuals in this section may be copied as additional handouts to increase students' understanding of the stages of human development in the womb.

First Month

Size: about 1/4 inch

The baby's heart is beating, and the brain is unmistakably human in proportion. The baby has eyes, ears, kidneys, a liver, a mouth and an umbilical cord.

Second Month

Size: about 1 1/2 inches

The baby's skeleton is complete. Her hands and fingers are beginning to form. She can move. The buds of milk (baby) teeth are appearing. Ankles, knees, and toes can be made out. Her brain waves can be measured on an EEG. The baby responds to touch.

Third Month

Size: about 3 inches

The baby is now clearly either a boy or a girl. If an object is placed in the palm of the baby's hand, he will grasp it. He can make a fist. By the end of this month, the baby's body is essentially built.

Fourth Month

Size: about 9 inches

The baby's brain has begun the maturing process that will not be completed until the baby is about fourteen years old. Right now, the baby is growing very rapidly. The eyelids are sealed together and won't open again until about the seventh month. The baby's body is covered with fine downy hair. Fingernails and toenails appear; fingers and toes have their own unique prints. The baby's mouth opens and closes and swallowing can be detected.

Fifth Month

Size: about 12 inches

The baby's eyelashes have become apparent. She has developed a sucking reflex and can suck her thumb.

Sixth Month

Size: about 14 inches

The baby continues to gain weight and grow longer. He can now respond to sound.

Seventh Month

Size: now weighs about 2 1/2 pounds

The baby's grip is perfected and is even stronger now than it will be shortly after birth. The hair on the baby's head is growing longer, and the downy covering on the rest of the body is disappearing. The baby's eyelids are open again.

Eighth Month

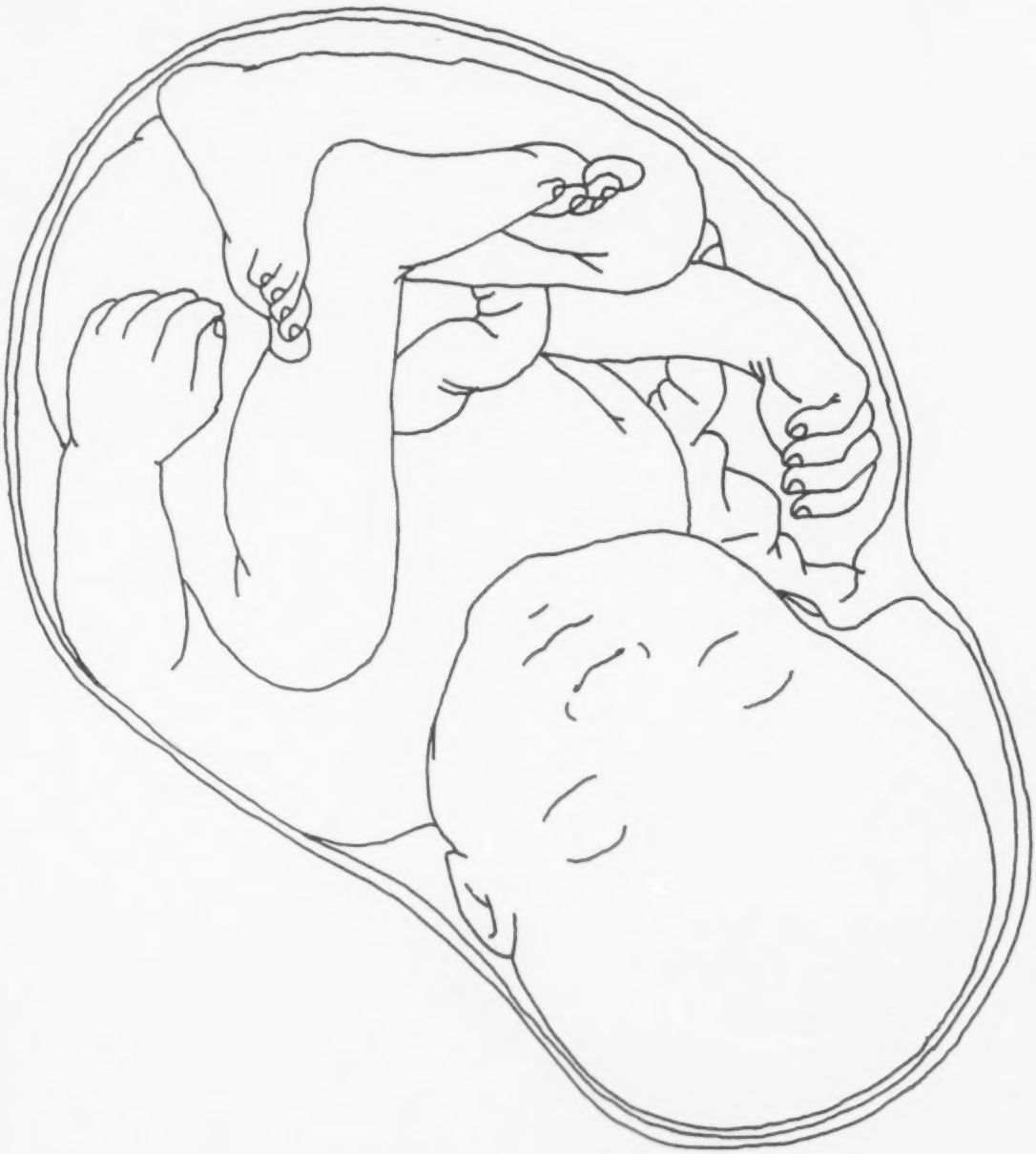
Size: weighs about 4 pounds

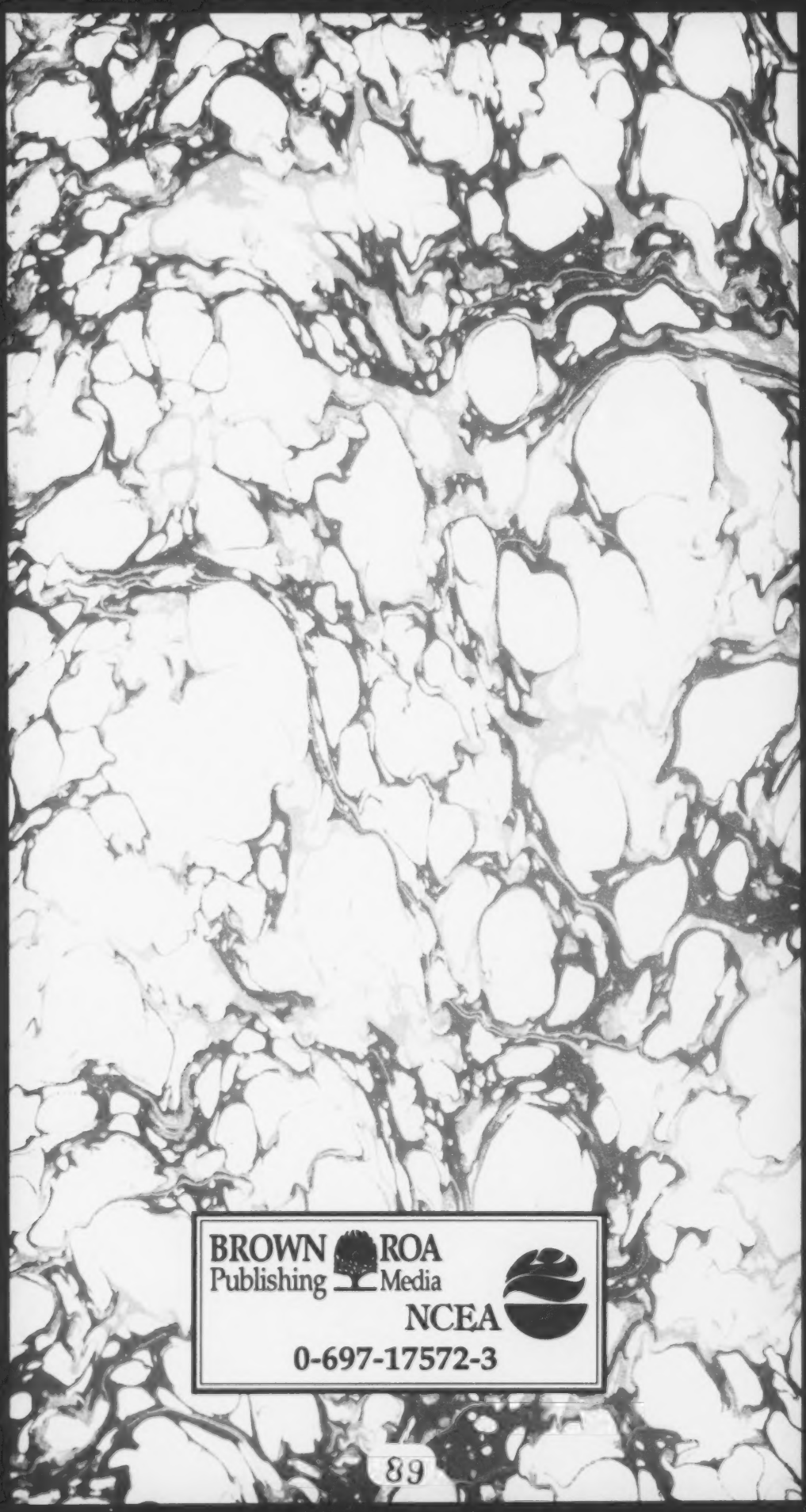
The baby continues to gain weight. He is also developing a protective padding of fat that will keep him warm after his birth.

Ninth Month

Size: weighs about 7 1/2 pounds

The baby is about twenty inches long. She has shifted her position in her mother's womb is nearly ready to be born. After birth, she will continue her human growth process for approximately the next seventy years.

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